

SENATE EDUCATION
EXHIBIT NO. 1
DATE 1-12-2009
BILL NO. 67

SB67 Testimony
Joyce Silverthorne
January 9, 2009,
Senate Education Comm., Room 303, 3:00 p.m.

I am Joyce Silverthorne, P-20 Policy Advisory to Superintendent Denise Juneau, and I rise in opposition to Senate Bill 67.

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROHIBITING THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FROM IMPLEMENTING ANY RULE, POLICY, OR STANDARD THAT WILL HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL IMPACT ON A SCHOOL DISTRICT UNTIL THE LEGISLATURE APPROPRIATES MONEY TO FUND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RULE, POLICY, OR STANDARD; AMENDING SECTIONS 1-2-113, 20-2-121, AND 20-7-101, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

On May 1, 2003, Governor Judy Martz signed House Bill 736 into law. (See Appendix A for the full text.) The bill established a Montana K-12 Public School Renewal Commission to study the structure and funding of Montana public schools. HB 736 was introduced by Rep. Ray Brown (R), Rep. Dave Wanzeneid (D), Sen. Jon Tester (D), and Sen. Fred Thomas (R).

The bill designated seven state officials and legislators as core members. Those core members identified key stakeholder groups to appoint representatives to serve on the Commission. Nominations were received from 16 groups, and 22 additional members were chosen.

The Commission began its work in July of 2003. On September 8, 2004, after many meetings and much deliberation, the Commission arrived at consensus on the following recommendations for changes in Montana K-12 education.

- ☐ Building a quality education on the foundation of the Montana Accreditation Standards
- ☐ Providing greater flexibility in the school calendar to expand learning opportunities and professional development
- ☐ Studying the regionalization of education services
- ☐ Eliminating barriers to voluntary consolidation of school districts, both statutory and financial
- ☐ Supporting a statewide school district employee insurance pool with state incentives for participation
- ☐ Restoring the position of Gifted and Talented Specialist and funding professional development and other outreach services
- ☐ Phasing in increased state support for Special Education services
- ☐ Providing adequate funding to cover the costs of operating and maintaining quality public elementary and secondary schools
- ☐ Modernizing revenue and taxation to promote equalization for taxpayers and schools to balance the benefits and burden

- ☐ Supporting state funding to expand kindergarten services [supported by majority consensus with dissenting Commissioners]
- ☐ Supporting state funding for *Indian Education for All* curriculum, policies, and rules
- ☐ Supporting state-facilitated public/private partnerships for local summer programs and extended school programs [supported by majority consensus with a dissenting Commissioner]
- ☐ Recognizing the importance of an adequate infrastructure [physical plant and equipment] as a key component of a quality education

The Commission reported their recommendations to the Legislative Interim Committee on Education and Local Government.

The Office of Public Instruction supports the extensive work, considerable investment, and the conclusions of the Renewal Commission. We urge the Committee to accept these findings and support the work in progress of the governance of quality public education in Montana.

Appendices

- Appendix A House Bill 736 establishing the School Renewal Commission
 - Appendix B List of K-12 School Renewal Commission Members and Alternates
 - Appendix C Commission Staff and Support Personnel from Agencies and Financial Support
 - Appendix D School Renewal Commission Overview Remarks, July 11, 2003
 - Appendix E Board of Public Education Position Paper on Public School Funding and Structure, November 22, 2002
 - Appendix F Defining a Basic Education, Board of Public Education, October 13, 2003
 - Appendix G Commission Ground Rules, August 13, 2003
 - Appendix H Commission Work Plan, October 10, 2003
 - Appendix I List of Components of Quality Education – above accreditation standards
 - Appendix J Quality Education Matrix
 - Appendix K Parking Lot list of topics
 - Appendix L Survey of Regionalization Efforts in Montana
 - Appendix M Survey of Other States Education Service Agency Structures
 - Appendix N Peer States Video Conference – Education Service Agencies
 - Appendix O Indian Education for All: Title 20, Chapter 1, Part 5, *Montana Codes Annotated (MCA)*, American Indian Studies, legislation enacted in 1999 Session, HB 528
 - Appendix P Full-Day Kindergarten Research Report, Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA)
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